



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2015-5807; Directorate Identifier 2015-SW-063-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Airbus Helicopters Model AS355NP helicopters with certain fire extinguishing systems. This proposed AD would require removing and installing the fire extinguishing system so that each squib on the engine compartment fire extinguisher is controlled by a matching control button. This proposed AD is prompted by the discovery that the left-hand discharge system of the fire extinguishing system was incorrectly connected to the right-hand engine compartment and the right-hand discharge system was incorrectly connected to the left-hand engine compartment. The proposed actions would correct the connections and would prevent the fire extinguishing system discharging to the wrong engine compartment, failure of the fire extinguishing system to control a fire, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Docket: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: Send comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to the “Mail” address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-5807; or in person at the Docket Operations Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA AD), the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations Office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

For service information identified in this proposed rule, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 N. Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at <http://www.airbushelicopters.com/techpub>. You may review the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Schwab, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email george.schwab@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments, data, or views. We also invite comments relating to the economic, environmental, energy, or federalism impacts that might result from adopting the proposals in this document. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. To ensure the docket does not contain duplicate comments, commenters should send only one copy of written comments, or if comments are filed electronically, commenters should submit only one time.

We will file in the docket all comments that we receive, as well as a report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this proposed rulemaking. Before acting on this proposal, we will consider all comments we receive on or before the closing date for comments. We will consider comments filed after the comment period has closed if it is possible to do so without incurring expense or delay. We may change this proposal in light of the comments we receive.

Discussion

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, issued EASA Emergency AD No. 2011-0192-E, dated October 4, 2011, to correct an unsafe condition for Eurocopter (now Airbus Helicopters) Model AS355NP

helicopters equipped with an Arrius 1A1 engine fire extinguishing system through production modification OP-3931. EASA advises that during an inspection of the engine fire extinguishing system on an AS355NP helicopter, the left hand (LH) fire extinguisher discharge system was found connected to the right hand (RH) engine compartment and the RH discharge system was connected to the LH engine compartment. An investigation showed that this erroneous installation was inherent in Eurocopter production modification OP-3931. According to EASA, this condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to the discharge of the fire extinguisher in the wrong engine compartment in the event of a fire. Pending the development of a modified extinguishing system, EASA Emergency AD No. 2011-0192-E required installing a placard warning the flight crew of the erroneous installation until the squibs on each fire extinguisher are exchanged.

After EASA issued Emergency AD No. 2011-0192-E, Airbus Helicopters developed a permanent modification of the discharge system to reconfigure the position of the squibs on each fire extinguisher to line up with the control buttons. EASA subsequently issued superseding EASA AD No. 2015-0181, dated August 31, 2015, to retain the requirements of its previous Emergency AD and require the modification of the engine fire extinguishing discharge system within 12 months.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by the aviation authority of France and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with France, EASA, its technical representative, has notified us of the unsafe condition described in its AD. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all known relevant

information and determined that an unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR part 51

We reviewed Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. AS355-26.00.10, Revision 0, dated July 2, 2015 (ASB AS355-26.00.10). ASB AS355-26.00.10 provides procedures for removing the fire extinguishing system and re-installing it in a configuration where the squibs match the positioning of the fire extinguisher discharge heads. ASB AS355-26.00.10 also specifies removing any previously-affixed placard on the instrument panel and installing new discharge system pipes. Helicopters with modification 07-3990 installed have already complied with ASB AS355-26.00.10.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Other Related Service Information

We also reviewed Eurocopter Emergency Alert Service Bulletin No. 26.00.09, Revision 0, dated September 15, 2011 (EASB 26.00.09), issued prior to the permanent modification developed by Airbus Helicopters. EASB 26.00.09 provided procedures for interchanging the squibs on each fire extinguisher. Until this was accomplished, EASB 26.00.09 specified affixing a label on the instrument panel to make the flight crew aware of the crossed connection.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require within 600 hours time-in-service or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first, removing and correctly installing the fire extinguishing system, and removing any placards on the instrument panel if installed.

Differences between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD

The EASA AD requires installing a placard on the instrument panel to warn the flight crew of the erroneous installation until the squibs on each fire extinguisher are exchanged, and then, within 12 months, removing and re-installing the fire extinguishing system to position the squibs in line with the control buttons. This proposed AD would not require installation of the placards or the temporary exchange of the squibs. Also, this proposed AD would require removing and re-installing the fire extinguisher system within 600 hours TIS or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD would affect 2 helicopters of U.S. Registry and that labor costs average \$85 per work hour. We expect that removing and installing the fire extinguishing system would require 24 work hours and required parts would cost \$6,367. Based on these estimates, we expect a total cost of \$8,407 per helicopter and \$16,814 for the U.S. fleet.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in “Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements.” Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska to the extent that it justifies making a regulatory distinction; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

We prepared an economic evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this proposed AD and placed it in the AD docket.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

Airbus Helicopters: Docket No. FAA-2015-5807; Directorate Identifier 2015-SW-063-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model AS355NP helicopters, certificated in any category, with an Arrius 1A1 fire extinguishing system installed.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as an incorrectly connected fire extinguishing discharge system. This condition could result in the fire extinguishing system discharging to the wrong engine compartment, failure of the fire extinguishing system to contain a fire, and loss of control of the helicopter.

(c) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE Federal Register].

(d) Compliance

You are responsible for performing each action required by this AD within the specified compliance time unless it has already been accomplished prior to that time.

(e) Required Actions

Within 600 hours time-in-service or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first, remove and install the fire extinguishing system, and remove any placards on the instrument panel if installed, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 3.B. and 3.B.1 through 3.B.2, of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. AS355-26.00.10, Revision 0, dated July 2, 2015.

(f) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Group, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: George Schwab, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email 9-ASW-FTW-AMOC-Requests@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, we suggest that you notify your principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office or certificate holding district office before operating any aircraft complying with this AD through an AMOC.

(g) Additional Information

(1) Eurocopter Emergency Alert Service Bulletin No. 26.00.09, Revision 0, dated September 15, 2011, which is not incorporated by reference, contains additional information about the subject of this AD. For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 N. Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at <http://www.airbushelicopters.com/techpub>. You may review the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

(2) The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD No. 2015-0181, dated August 31, 2015. You may view the EASA AD on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> in the AD Docket.

(h) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 2620, Extinguishing System.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 4, 2016.

Scott A. Horn,

Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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